

General Policies from the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan

I. Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan Policies

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan is a joint plan between the city of Boulder and Boulder County that provides shared responsibility for planning and development in the Boulder Valley. The general policies section of the plan provides the overall planning framework for sustainability, intergovernmental cooperation, growth management and annexation.

1. General Policies

Boulder has a long tradition of community planning. Most of the key policies that have guided the development pattern in the Boulder Valley have not changed since the 1977 Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan was first adopted, and many of them stem from long-standing community values. Boulder's planning has focused on respecting our unique community identity and sense of place, city-county cooperation, and keeping Boulder a distinct, separate and compact community. They represent a clear, articulate vision of our desired development pattern including:

- Recognition of sustainability as a unifying goal to secure Boulder's future economic, ecological and social health.
- Commitment to open space preservation and the use of open space buffers to define the community.
- Use of urban growth boundaries to maintain a compact city (the boundaries of the service area have remained virtually unchanged since first developed in 1977).
- Encouragement of compact, contiguous development and a preference for infill land redevelopment as opposed to sprawl.
- Provision of quality urban spaces, parks and recreation that serve all sectors of the community and trails and walkways that connect the community.
- Commitment to preservation of natural, cultural and historic features that contribute to defining the unique sense of place in Boulder.
- Commitment to programs that support respect for human dignity, human rights and the inclusion of all residents in community and civic life.
- Recognition of the importance of a central area (Downtown, University of Colorado, the Boulder Valley Regional Center) as a regional service center of the Boulder Valley and a variety of subcommunity and neighborhood activity centers distributed throughout the community.
- Recognition of the importance of the Federal Scientific Laboratories (NOAA, NIST, NCAR), the University of Colorado, and the private scientific and technology community that contributes to the economic vitality of Boulder.
- Commitment to a diversity of housing types and price ranges to meet the needs of the Boulder Valley population.
- Commitment to a balanced multi-modal transportation system.

Sustainability (1.01-1.08)

1.01 Community Sustainability.

The city and county adopt the sustainability principles in policies 1.01-1.05 to interpret and guide implementation of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.

The city and county recognize

- a) the critical interrelationships among economic, social, and environmental health;
- b) the way we produce, trade, and consume impacts our ability to sustain natural resources;
- c) social and cultural equity and diversity creates valuable human capital which contributes to the economy and environmental sustainability;
- d) planned physical development has an impact on social conditions and should be considered in community planning; and
- e) the quality of environmental, economic and social health is built upon the full engagement and involvement of the community.

The city and county seek to maintain and enhance the livability, health and vitality of the Boulder Valley and the natural systems of which it is a part now and in the longterm future. The city and county seek to preserve choices for future generations and to anticipate and adapt to changing community needs and external influences.

1.02 Principles of Environmental Sustainability.

There are limits to the capacity of the biosphere to support the life of human beings at current levels of consumption and pollution. There are limits to the land and soil available for food production, to available water, to resources such as trees, fish and wildlife, to industrial resources like oil and metals, and to the ability of nature to absorb our waste. With this in mind, the city and county acknowledge the importance of natural capital, which can be kept at healthy levels for the long term only when we are able to do the following:

- a) Renewable resources should not be used faster than they are recharged or replenished by the environment.
- b) Non-renewable resources should be used with the greatest care and efficiency, and some of those should be used to develop renewable replacements.
- c) Waste should not be dumped into nature any faster than nature can absorb it.

1.03 Principles of Economic Sustainability.

- a) The city and county will encourage a viable and balanced economic structure and employment base within the parameters of established land use, environmental and growth policies.
- b) The city and county recognize that a healthy, adaptable local economy is vital to the community's ability to provide a highly desirable quality of life, high levels of services and amenities.
- c) The city and county will promote a diverse and sustainable economy that supports the needs of all community members.
- d) The city and county will seek to ensure that current needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, for the economy is a subsystem of the environment and depends upon the environment both as a source of raw material inputs and as a sink for waste outputs.

1.04 Principles of Social Sustainability.

The city and county will promote a healthy, sustainable community by:

- a) Recognizing, respecting, and valuing cultural and social diversity.
- b) Recognizing that social and cultural inequities create environmental and economic instability.
- c) Ensuring the basic health and safety needs of all residents are met.
- d) Providing infrastructure that will encourage culturally and socially diverse communities to both prosper within and connect to the larger community.

1.05 Community Engagement.

The city and county recognize that the quality of environmental, economic and social health is built upon full involvement of the community. The city and county will recognize the rights of and encourage all community members to play a role in governmental decisions, especially those that affect their lives or property, through continual efforts to maintain and improve public communication and the open conduct of business. In addition, the city and county will continue to support programs and provide opportunities for public participation and neighborhood involvement. Efforts will be made to remove barriers to participation and involve community members not usually engaged in civic life.

1.06 Indicators of Sustainability.

The city and county will establish indicators of sustainability specific to the Boulder Valley. The choice of indicators will be based on their ability to provide feedback that will support and strengthen efforts taken to move the community to sustainability in a reasonable period of time.

1.07 Leadership in Sustainability.

The city and county will apply the principles of sustainability to their actions and decisions. The city and county will act as community leaders and stewards of our resources, serving as a role model for others and striving to create a sustainable community that lives conscientiously as part of the planet and ecosystems we inhabit and that are influenced by our actions. Through their master plans, regulations, policies and programs, the city and county will strive to create a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community for future generations.

1.08 Consideration of Environmental, Economic and Social Impacts.

The city and the county will consider social, economic and environmental impacts in the legislative decision-making process.

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